

### *Leads Group of Freshman Members in Letter to Conferees*

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Washington, DC – Wednesday, Congressman Harry Teague led a delegation of his freshman class colleagues in signing a letter urging restoration of education funding to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. With 21 co-signers, the letter urges appointed conferees to include the House-passed education figures in the final conference report. The House version of the bill included significant support to local school districts for school construction, Title 1-A and IDEA – programs that will benefit students, create jobs, and help states’ stabilize their budgets. The Senate version of the American recovery act cuts education funding levels by \$70 billion.

“With New Mexico facing \$454 million budget shortfall, the need for a comprehensive recovery package that addresses our education needs is critical. Our local schools and governments should not have to make the choice between service cuts or higher taxes,” said Congressman Harry Teague. “A comprehensive recovery package that includes immediate investments in education will not only help New Mexico save and create critical jobs but strategic investments in education will help New Mexico become stronger, more productive and competitive.”

The House version of the bill included \$140 billion in aid for education, including \$79 billion to stabilize states’ finances, \$14 - \$16 billion to improve and repair public school facilities, \$13.1 billion for Title I classroom assistance, \$13.6 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and \$2.1 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start.

Conferees were appointed by leadership yesterday to craft a compromise between the House and Senate versions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Negotiations are expected to continue for the rest of the week.

**FULL TEXT OF LETTER:**

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February 11, 2009

The Honorable David Obey

Chairman

House Committee on Appropriations

H-218 U.S. Capitol

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable

Jerry Lewis

Ranking Member

House Committee on Appropriations

1016 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charlie Rangel

Chairman

House Committee on Ways & Means

1102 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman

Chairman

House Energy and Commerce Committee

2125 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Camp

Ranking Member

1139-E Longworth House Office Building

House Committee on Ways & Means

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Obey, Rangel and Waxman and Ranking Members Lewis and Camp:

As you work to reconcile the House and Senate passed versions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we urge you to protect taxpayers, teacher jobs, and the futures of our children by including the House's more robust levels of education funding in your conference report.

With America's economy facing its toughest times since World War II and tax revenues plummeting, states now face a \$91 billion education funding shortfall. Without correction, this gap will lead to teacher layoffs, higher state and local taxes, and a drop-off in resources for classroom instruction. At a time when the federal government is proposing to address the economic recession with a package of tax cuts and stimulus spending, it makes no sense to have states simultaneously raise taxes and cut spending. In addition, deep cuts to state and local education budgets would deny a quality education to and limit future earnings for thousands, and have long-term negative impacts on our economic productivity.

In negotiations over the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, both House and Senate leaders proposed, and the House has passed, \$140 billion in aid for education, including \$79 billion to stabilize states' finances, \$14 - \$16 billion to improve and repair public school facilities, \$13.1 billion for Title I classroom assistance, \$13.6 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and \$2.1 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start. However, the legislation passed by the Senate on February 10 cuts \$70 billion from the initial bicameral proposal.

Specifically, the Senate cuts \$40 billion for state fiscal stabilization meant to protect teacher jobs and stave off tax hikes, eliminates \$20 billion that would fund school construction and create 200,000 jobs, and strikes over \$1 billion from Head Start.

The importance of the education funding provided in the House version is fourfold: It prevents state and local tax increases, it prevents teachers from being laid off, it creates jobs, and it protects the future of our children and our economy. Economists and scientists agree: Strategic, targeted investments in education are needed to create jobs, give America's children the skills they need to compete globally, and to put our economy back on the road to recovery.

We strongly urge you to remain mindful of our economic recovery, the jobs of our teachers and the futures of our children, and retain the House passed education funding levels in your conference report for the Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Sincerely,

**Harry Teague**

Chellie Pingree

Gerald Connolly

Kathy Dahlkemper

Marcia Fudge

Alan Grayson

Debbie Halvorson

Martin Heinrich

Jim Himes

Mary Jo Kilroy

Larry Kissell

Suzanne Kosmas

Ben Ray Lujan

Daniel Maffei

Betsy Markey

Eric Massa

Michael McMahon

Thomas Perriello

Jared Polis

Kurt Schrader



Paul Tonko

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